

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)
)
Elimination of Rate-of-Return Regulation of) RM No. 10822
Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers)
)
Federal-State Joint Board on Universal)
Service)

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MOTION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

Pursuant to Section 1.46 of the Commission's Rules, CenturyTel, Inc.

("CenturyTel")¹ hereby requests an extension of time until January 16, 2004, and February 13, 2004, to file comments and reply comments, respectively, in response to the Commission's November 19, 2003 Public Notice in the above-captioned proceeding and Western Wireless Corporation's ("Western Wireless") Petition for Rulemaking to Eliminate Rate-of-Return Regulation of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers ("ILECs") ("Petition").

There is good cause for granting the requested brief extension of time. The Commission's system of rate-of-return regulation, which the Petition urges the Commission to eliminate, has been in existence for several decades. As the Petition reflects, doing so would have a dramatic impact on some of the most fundamental aspects of the Commission's regulation of over 1300 local exchange carriers. It would necessitate wholesale changes to the Commission's universal service support mechanisms and access charge regulations under which these carriers operate.

¹ CenturyTel, Inc. is the parent company of numerous rate-of-return incumbent local exchange carriers that would be affected by any rule changes adopted in this proceeding

Consequently, the Commission should proceed only after careful consideration of the issues Western Wireless raises in light of a well-developed record. CenturyTel and other ILECs are very interested in the issues raised by the Petition, which have far-reaching implications. There is a large number of pleadings due to the Wireline Competition Bureau prior to the Christmas holiday, including

- Comments in WC Docket No. 03-173, Pricing of Unbundled Network Elements and the Resale of Service by Incumbent LECs;
- Comments in 96-45, Petition of ALLTEL Communications, Inc. for Consent to Redefine the Service Areas of Rural Telephone Companies in the State of Wisconsin;
- Comments in CC Docket No. 95-116, BellSouth Corporation Petition for Declaratory Ruling And/Or Waiver;
- Reply comments in 96-45, Centennial Cellular Tri-State Operating Partnership and Centennial Claiborne Cellular Corp. Petition for Waiver of Section 54.313(d) of the Commission's Rules;
- Reply comments in 96-45, Michiana Metronet Inc. and Centennial Michigan RSA 6 Cellular Corp., Petition for Waiver of Section 54.313(d) of the Commission's Rules;
- Reply comments in WC Docket No. 03-242, Petition of Northland Networks, Ltd. Pursuant to §252(e)(5) of the Communications Act for Expedited Pre-emption of the Jurisdiction of the New York State Public Service Commission Regarding Interpretation and Enforcement of an Interconnection Agreement; and
- Reply comments in CC Docket No. 96-45, AT&T Corp. Petition for Preemption, Pursuant to Section 253 of the Communications Act and Common Law Principles, of South Carolina Statutes that Discriminate Against New Entrants.

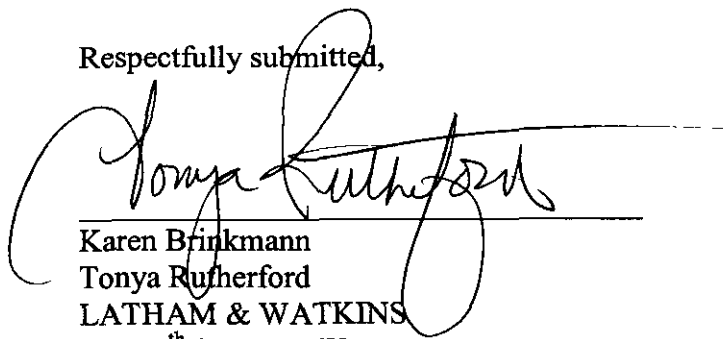
CenturyTel believes that the requested extension would allow it to offer far more detailed, complete, and insightful comments on this Petition than it otherwise could. Therefore, for these reasons, and in light of the recent Thanksgiving holiday and the upcoming holidays, CenturyTel

respectfully requests an extension of time to ensure that commenting parties have sufficient time to respond thoughtfully to Western Wireless' Petition.

This extension will not prejudice any party. Counsel for CenturyTel has conferred with Counsel for Western Wireless, who fully supports the extension. CenturyTel also has notified Commission staff orally of this motion.

For these reasons, CenturyTel respectfully requests that its Motion for Extension of Time be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Brinkmann', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial 'K'.

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Counsel for CenturyTel, Inc.

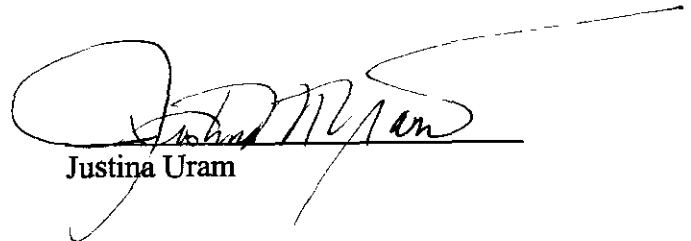
Dated: December 12, 2003

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Motion for Extension of Time was sent by express mail, this 12th of December, 2003, to:

Michele C. Farquhar
David L. Sieradzki
Hogan & Hartson, L.L.P.
555 Thirteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20554

With courtesy copy hand-delivered to:
William J. Scher
Federal Communications Commission
Wireline Competition Bureau
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554



Justina Uram